

Good afternoon, Chair Osten, Chair Walker, Vice Chairs, and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

My name is Max Perkins and I am the Senior Policy Manager for the Northeast for Unite Us. Founded in 2013 by two veterans who served in Afghanistan, Unite Us builds coordinated care networks to securely connect health and social care providers in a common ecosystem, enabling bidirectional referrals and communication between once siloed providers. In Connecticut, Unite Us manages the Unite Connecticut network, which is supported by partner organizations such as the Connecticut Hospital Association, Yale New Haven Health, and Community Health Network of Connecticut, among many other wonderful institutions.

It is our company mission to connect health and social care for the purpose of ensuring every individual, no matter who they are or where they live, can access the critical services they need to live happy and healthy lives. Unite Us has successfully scaled our networks in 46 states, including through partnerships with state government programs in Rhode Island, North Carolina, Virginia, California, Oregon, and Nebraska. Unite Us also counts as partners numerous local government entities, such as public health agencies, veterans services organizations, child welfare departments, and more than 4,000 schools nationwide. To date, our networks have served more than 33 million individuals nationwide and offer more than 2 million different services to those in need.

After 10 years working to connect our fragmented systems of care, we know our networks increase access to health and social services and are driving improvements in overall health and wellbeing.

I am here today to offer our support for Governor Lamont's proposed Universal Home Visiting Program, which is included in the Governor's bill 986, and urge this committee to fund this important work with new money, as the budget before you currently does not include funding for this initiative.

At Unite Us, we work with community-based organizations, health systems, and government partners to ensure all women and infants, particularly those at risk of poor health outcomes, have a chance at a safe and healthy life. For example, Unite Us partners with New York City's Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Home Visiting program - one of the largest in the country - to enable government employees to screen and refer pregnant persons and new families to the most appropriate home visiting service and empower those nurses conducting home visits to seamlessly connect families to available resources in their communities that can address unmet SDOH-related needs, like food insecurity and mental health care.

We believe innovative and collaborative strategies, like Home Visiting Programs, should focus on removing barriers to accessing care of any kind - health or social care - and should emphasize preventative approaches that integrate existing community resources and programs. To that end, we also request this committee consider funding a broader effort to support a statewide coordinated health and social care network to improve health and wellbeing, reduce costs, and advance the state's health equity goals. Unite Us stands ready to work in partnership with the legislature and the state, should there be interest in such an effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Best,

*Max Perkins*

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